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UNITED STATES CONGRESS

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To: jack.kingston@squirepb.com
From: Congressman Brad Sherman
RE: Rep. Kingston Ethiopia Invite


Dear Congressman Kingston,

I received your letter asking me to serve as an honorary co-host for a reception for Ethiopian Finance Minister Ahmed Shide and Ethiopian Ambassador to the United States Fitsum Arega on April 26.

As you know, the Ethiopian government, aided by the government of Eritrea and various regional militias, are waging war against the people of Tigray. Regardless of the merits of the positions of the various parties, one thing is clear to all people of goodwill: **using starvation as a weapon of war is a war crime, and when it is used in a manner likely to kill millions of people and substantially destroy an entire ethnic group, it rises to the level of genocide.** Unfortunately, the government, which has retained your firm is using starvation as a weapon, blocking humanitarian aid, and thus killing many thousands (soon hundreds of thousands) of innocent people.

While, the Ethiopian government's imposed media blackout has made tracking the full scale of devastation inside Tigray impossible, recent reports estimate that half a million Tigrayans have died – nearly 10% of Tigray's population.¹ According to the World Food Program, an additional 40% of Tigray's population is suffering from an extreme lack of food² and 90% of its population is in need of urgent humanitarian assistance.³ Even Tigray's main hospital has entirely run out of food and 90% of its medication.⁴ According to Secretary Blinken, "urgently needed humanitarian relief is being blocked by

¹ March 2022 The Globe and Mail: Tigray war has seen up to half a million dead from violence and starvation, say researchers <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-tigray-war-has-seen-up-to-half-a-million-dead-from-violence-and/>

² January 2022 Al Jazeera: Almost 40% of Tigrayans suffer 'extreme lack of food', WFP warns <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/28/almost-40-of-tigrayans-suffer-extreme-lack-of-food-wfp-warns>

³ April 2022 U.S. News: Food Convoy Heads to Ethiopia's Tigray, 1st Since December <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2022-04-01/food-convoy-heads-to-ethiopias-tigray-1st-since-december#:~:text=immediate%20humanitarian%20truce.-,The%20U.N.,day%20to%20feed%20people%20there.>

⁴ April 2022 Al Jazeera: 'We've finished our tears': Tigray's main hospital exhausts food <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/22/weve-finished-our-tears-main-hospital-in-tigray-exhausts-food>

the Ethiopian and Eritrean militaries as well as other armed actors.”⁵ Major human rights organizations and the Associated Press have confirmed that the people of Tigray are being subjected to ethnic cleansing with the complicity and even participation of the Ethiopian government⁶ – even Ethiopian identity cards are eliminating all reference to the Tigrayan people⁷.

Based on the foregoing, you would assume that I would reject your offer to be an honorary co-host of the reception for the Ethiopian Finance Minister and Ambassador. But let me instead respond with a proposition: I will join you if on April 25th, the Ethiopian government allows 100 humanitarian aid trucks to bring food into Tigray – the amount of aid trucks the U.N. says are needed every day to feed the starving people of Tigray⁸. Yet less than 100 aid trucks in total (for nearly a month) have been allowed to enter Tigray since the humanitarian truce was declared by the Ethiopian Government on March 28th, nearly a month ago. As it stands, the Governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea continue to block organizations such as the World Food Program, USAID, and the International Committee of the Red Cross from bringing the necessary food and humanitarian aid to the people of Tigray.

Please let me know whether your client will accept my offer and allow 100 trucks to deliver food to the people of Tigray on 25th of April.

Very truly yours, your friend and former colleague,



Congressman Brad Sherman

⁵ <https://www.state.gov/united-states-actions-to-press-for-the-resolution-of-the-crisis-in-the-tigray-region-of-ethiopia/>

⁶ Amnesty International Report: ‘We will erase you from this land’: Crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing in Ethiopia’s Western Tigray Zone <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr25/5449/2022/en/>

⁷ AP: ‘Leave no Tigrayan’: In Ethiopia, an ethnicity is erased. <https://apnews.com/article/ethiopia-tigray-minority-ethnic-cleansing-sudan-world-news-842741eebf9bf0984946619c0fc15023>

⁸ April 2022 U.S. News: Food Convoy Heads to Ethiopia's Tigray, 1st Since December <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2022-04-01/food-convoy-heads-to-ethiopias-tigray-1st-since-december#:~:text=immediate%20humanitarian%20truce.,The%20U.N.,day%20to%20feed%20people%20there.>